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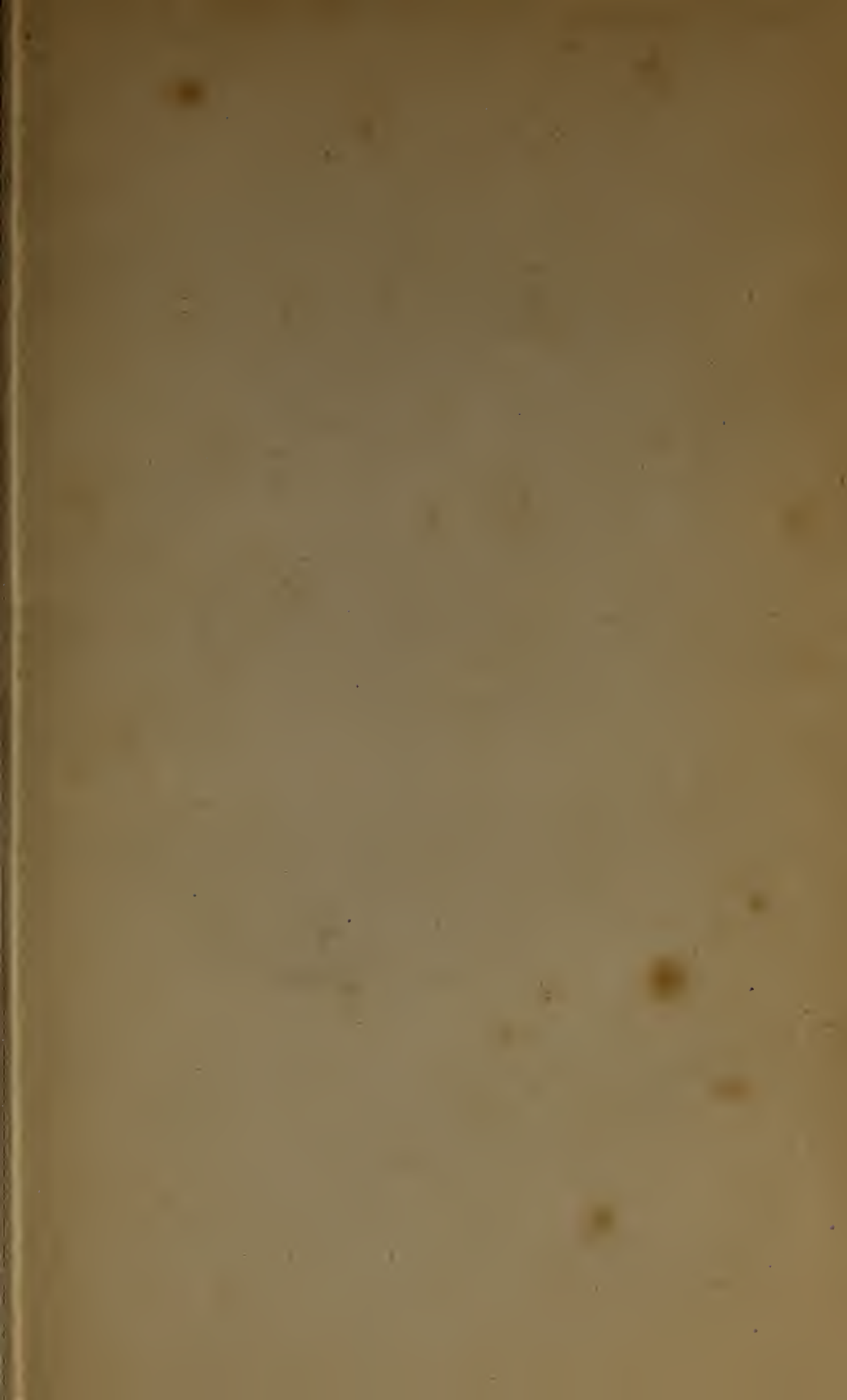


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1837

DOBELL COLLECTION





BEATRICE OF FERRARA.

&c. &c.

Points for "small"
"Circle of friends."

BEATRICE OF FERRARA.

A Tragic Drama,

IN THREE ACTS.

Plunkett, Arthur Hume

LONDON :

EFFINGHAM WILSON, 88, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1837.

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LONDON :
Maurice and Co., Fenchurch Street.

This Play is an attempt to adapt *One in a Thousand* (by the Author of *Richlieu* and *Darnley*) to the stage.

In offering it (together with a few early attempts at poetry) to the perusal of a small circle of friends, whose kindness and partiality have induced them to take an interest in its success, I feel an apology is due to the Author of the highly dramatic work from the pages of which it is constructed, for the imperfect manner in which the subject has been treated, in my anxiety to witness the beautiful creation of that gentleman's fancy,—the Italian exile,—embodied on the stage.

A. H. P.

March 1837.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HENRY THE FOURTH, *King of France.*

THE DUKE OF MAYENNE, *Head of the League.*

THE MARQUIS OF ST. REAL.

THE COUNT ST. AUBIN.

ALBERT DE WOLFSTROM, *a German Knight in the service of
Mayenne.*

ARMANDI, *an Italian Perfumer, attached to the Court of Catha-
rine.*

MARCEL, *Attendant on Beatrice of Ferrara.*

LEWIS, *Page to Aubin.*

MARCO, *Servant of St. Real.*

Leaguers, Guests, Dancers, Knights, &c.

THE DUCHESS OF MONTPENSIER, *Sister of Mayenne.*

THE LADY EUGENIA DEMENANCOURT, *Ward of Mayenne.*

BEATRICE OF FERRARA, *an Italian Princess, an exile at the Court
of France.*

Attendants, Ladies, &c.

Time, 1589. Scene, Paris and St. Cloud.

BEATRICE OF FERRARA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

*Interior of an Inn, or Hostelry, near the gates
of Paris.*

*Enter MARCO, the COUNT ST. AUBIN, and a Page, with
four or five Attendants.*

MARCO.

WELCOME, noble Count, welcome to Paris.
I'll to my master ; for all the live-long day
He paces in his chamber,—ever asks
If I am sure his letter reached the camp ?
I vow it did ; and then he swears again
“ It never did ! ” for if it had, Sir Count,
You'd have been here ere dawn of day.

AUBIN.

He's wrong.

I have obeyed his summons : tell him so.

MARCO.

I will, my lord, I will. He'll be right glad
To hear you are arrived : I'll hasten to him.

[*Exit* MARCO.]AUBIN (*to the Page*).

Hast thou no tidings yet of that wild boy,
Leonard di Monti ? I saw him last
Midst my retainers, ere we passed the gate,
And was about to call him to my side ;
But suddenly Bartholdo spoke to me.

PAGE.

There is one, my lord, who swears he saw
The Page amidst us, as we entered here ;
And that he darted off, as though in haste,
Along a by-street, as he thought, unseen.

AUBIN.

'Tis very strange ! I told him that I should
Require his aid and presence while in Paris.
Let him be sought.

[*Exeunt all except the Page.*]

Till his return, go you
And take his place. Keep watch beside the gate
Of the Hotel de Guise : should you behold

Demenancourt's fair daughter quit the house,
Inform me on the instant. Away : make speed.

[*Exit Page.*

Enter the MARQUIS ST. REAL.

Cousin St. Real, I attend your summons ;
And, by my faith, I will not Paris quit
Until Duke Mayenne tells me that you are
As free to leave this city as myself.
On what pretence is it he keeps you here ?

ST. REAL.

In sooth I cannot tell, unless he fears
My joining Henry's forces at St. Cloud.
Hearing the King was there encamped, I sought
Mayenne's safe-conduct and King Henry's leave
To freely enter Paris, or the camp,
And side with him whose cause should seem most just,
Either the League, or Henry of Navarre :
Then for that purpose was approaching here,
When I, and 'bout a score of my retainers,
Were suddenly surrounded by a troop
Of men, wearing the green scarf of the League,
In number full two hundred. We, of course,
Could offer no resistance. I produced
Mayenne's safe-conduct, but 'twas set at nought.

Since I have been in Paris, I in vain
Have daily sought an audience with Mayenne.
The Duchess of Montpensier tries her arts
And wiles to win me over to the League.

AUBIN.

This is another of that woman's deeds,
That crafty woman, ever at her work,
Ever intriguing in some busy scheme.
She knew full well, that once a prisoner here,
E'en should she fail to gain you to the League,
She could prevent your serving on the side
Of Henry of Navarre. By heaven ! St. Real,
Duke Mayenne shall release you in this hour.
I know him well ; and, Leaguer though he be,
No man his plighted word holds half so dear.
I'll urge your instant liberty.

ST. REAL.

Aubin,

Is 't true Eugenia Demenancourt
Is here a prisoner ?

AUBIN.

Ay, cousin, true :
The League still has her in its power.
The Hotel de Guise, the proud Leaguist's home,

Is now the prison of Demenancourt ;
Where, treated with the courtesy that's due
To her high rank and station, she remains
At best an honourable captive.

REAL.

Surely thou hast but to acquaint Mayenne
Of her late father's promise to yourself,
And he will give her up to you at once.

AUBIN.

I have done more:—the instant that I heard
The step which he had taken, I required
The orphan lady of Demenancourt
Should in that hour be placed within the hands
Of Henry of Navarre, he being our King.
After evasion and delay, Mayenne
Chose to inform me that the throne of France
Was vacant, a decree of the Sorbonne
And Parliament of Paris having so willed ;
That the same high authorities had made
My Lord Duke Mayenne, mark ye, no less than
Lieutenant-General of the kingdom ;
And that, therefore, none other for the time
Could be the guardian of Demenancourt.
He also hinted, that her father's death

To the lady made the thought of marriage,
For a time at least, impossible.

ST. REAL.

The loss of such a father
Cannot be all forgotten in a day.

AUBIN.

Tush, tush! you do forget Eugenia
Is the wealthiest heiress in all France,
Young, and cousin, you know how beautiful;
For faith! you almost made me jealous once.

ST. REAL.

Go to! go to! Nay, could my hand or word
Advance your marriage but a single day,
Both at your service you would ever find.
When gave I cause for jealousy?

AUBIN.

Tush!

I did but say I might have jealous been,
Had I not known you better. There was a time,
When our late royal Cath'rine held her court,
You ever shunned the bright eyes and sweet lips
That sought to lead you captive through
The flowery and the tangled paths of love,
To take your place beside Eugenia's feet,

ST. REAL.

If you will press me to it, Philip, because
She was the only pure thing present ;
And I oft thought she might feel hurt to see
Count Philip Aubin, her affianced lord,
Neglect and slight her, and forsake her presence
For the vile follower of a base Queen.
Ay, even so ! Nay, frown not on me ;
I speak of Beatrice of Ferrara.

AUBIN.

Beatrice of Ferrara ! Why, cousin,
I knew not that my mien toward her
Had drawn the marked attention that you say.
But let it pass : what were we speaking of ?
Oh, I remember ; the League's fair pris'ner.
She is an heiress, a right noble heiress ;
And Mayenne knows her hand is a brave prize
For the first man in France : is it not so ?
And he who serves him best in his base scheme,
Shall have the hand and fortune of his ward,
Spite of her father's plighted word to me.

ST. REAL.

But, Aubin, Eugenia will ne'er consent.

AUBIN.

Oh, Real, little dost thou know the sex !

They are light as a dry leaf borne about
Upon the breath of every wind that blows :
She whom they call the best, is firm in nought
But her caprices. Now mark me, cousin.
Within these few days I have seen Eugenia :
I sought an interview, and was received
By Mayenne, who without a scruple granted me
An audience, as he said, with his young ward.
'Twas all fair seeming till we met, when she,
Calmly and coldly, refused to ratify
The sacred promise that her father made.
Ay, do you hear, refused,—rejected me ;
Told me she did not, could not, love me.

Enter the Page.

PAGE (*aside.*)

My lord, the Lady Demenancourt
Hath quitted the Hotel de Guise but now :
I traced the noble maid to the hotel
Of the exiled Princess of Ferrara.

AUBIN.

Cousin,

I haste to Duke Mayenne. Within this hour
We meet at the Hotel de Guise. Farewell.

[*Exit* AUBIN *and* Page *on one side*, ST. REAL
on the other.

SCENE II.

Chamber in the Hotel of BEATRICE OF FERRARA.

BEATRICE is discovered, magnificently attired in the costume of the period (1589), at a table, seated and writing. MARCEL and a Page are in attendance.

BEATRICE.

Art sure, Marcel, that my arrival here,
And my long absence, unsuspected are
By all ?

MARCEL.

Most sure, sweet lady. There are none
Of all the nobles who were wont to crowd
The galleries of your hotel, but now
Are daily sighing for the loss of one,
Whose wit and beauty were their constant theme.
Lady, they think the fever, that has raged
With such malignant fury in this town,
Hath number'd you amongst its victims. Of all
Your favour'd friends, the fair Demenancourt
Hath been most forward in inquiry ;—nay,
Day after day hath importuned me much
To gain admittance, as she thought, to you.

BEATRICE (*to the Page.*)

Is the Lady Demenancourt aware,
As I desired, that I am here, and now
Will see her ?

PAGE.

Most noble mistress, it is so :
Your pleasure to the lady has been told.
Upon the instant she will be here.

BEATRICE.

Well.

Go, wait without.

[*Exit Page.*]

(*To MARCEL.*) Knowest thou Armandi ?

One of the many of the frivolous train
Of idle and dependant followers,
That our late Catherine de Medicis
From Italy brought with her here ? He's famed
For drugs and perfumes, jewels, costly silks—

MARCEL.

And poisons, lady. There's not a poison,
Or deadly drug, but, tell Armandi
That by your dearest friend you would 'twere ta'en,
He names his price ; and in a few short days
That friend no longer breathes.

BEATRICE.

Marcel, 'tis false !

MARCEL.

Were our good Catherine but alive, most like
She soon would make you think 'twere otherwise.
He served her bidding ever in her life,
And she protected him. There are, that say
That Catherine owes her thanks to Armandi,
Touching the matter of her hasty death.

BEATRICE.

'Tis false! Send for this dreaded Armandi.
Tell him the Princess of Ferrara
Wishes to purchase some most costly robes
And jewels—

Enter Page.

PAGE.

The Lady Demenancourt.

*[Exeunt MARCEL and Page.]**Enter EUGENIA DEMENANCOURT.*

EUGENIA.

O, Beatrice! and do we meet again!
Forgive my childish joy, my poor heart beats
With such wild haste. I thought some bitter foe
Taught you forgetfulness and cold dislike
Toward one, who through the sunny hours that we
Have been such dear companions—

BEATRICE.

Nay, nay.

EUGENIA.

I felt you had forgot me, cast me off
In the hour I needed most thy guiding hand.
Like as some petted child, with costly care,
Will for mere fancy cherish a weak flower
That claims a warmer clime than our cold north,
Till with faded splendour 'tis about to shine,
As if in memory of its distant home ;
And then, abandoned by that fost'ring hand
To the blighting kiss of the midnight breeze,
It droops ;—and, ere the morning sun its beams
Throws o'er the flower that it had taught to bloom,
Its dead leaves rustle in the chilling wind.

BEATRICE.

The raging fever, that so nearly laid
Your Beatrice in a cold, early grave,
They told me was contagious. Therefore I
Forbade your presence in my dreary house.
Why should you risk your valued precious life
For such a one as I am ?

EUGENIA.

Oh, Beatrice !

Thank heaven that you are safe. What a loss
Would thy sad death have proved to one, who knows
And loves thee as I do !

BEATRICE.

How few do that.

I hold the sweetest triumph of my life,
The winning from you your esteem and love ;
Proving I was not the base thing you thought,
And teaching you to know me as I am.

EUGENIA.

In truth, I never thought you base.

BEATRICE.

Nay, nay.

Surrounded as you saw me by the vile,
The profligate, the idle, and the vain ;
Beheld me mingling day and night with them ;
Ay, saw the seducers and the seduced
Of a corrupted and plague-tainted court
Kneeling and worshipping the pretty idol
You see before you now :—thought you not then,
In your own secret heart, that 'twas with joy
I bore it all ?

EUGENIA.

No, Beatrice, never.

Where'er I went, yours was the only name,
Free from a stain, untalked of in that court.
Not even the foolish gaudy flutterers,
Whose vanity is fed with their own lies
Against our sex, dared but to whisper
You smiled on them.

BEATRICE.

They dared not! they dared not!

No; there is not a minion in all France
Who'd dare to cast a slur upon my name.
Not because cowardly falsehood is their fear,
Were it as gross and glaring as the sun:
Not it; but that the braggarts know I hold
Beatrice of Ferrara has the right,—
Ay, and as fair a right as any *man*,—
That where her dearest honour is assailed,
She may revenge herself as best she can.

EUGENIA.

Oh, Beatrice!

BEATRICE.

Heed me, Eugenia.

When, fearing evil in my native land,
With fallen fortunes seeking Catherine's court,
The Queen received me, and, to do her right,

Showed me unvarying tenderness through life,
For years I lived in that corrupted court.
Many a man was there who sought my love,
In marriage, few; others with lighter vows;—
So deep and thorough was the great contempt
Within my heart I felt for the corrupt,
Vain, idle butterflies of that bad place,
That soon my scorn extended to the sex,
And for awhile I vowed that I should ne'er
Give thought to any man on all the earth.

EUGENIA.

Until you met Aubin. Nay, Beatrice,
I little thought your proud Italian blood
Would e'er have brooked your stooping thus to seek
Or court the love of any man.

BEATRICE.

Go to !

Oh, wrong me not. I have not loved unsought,
Nor called upon my head the bitter shame
Of being despised for courting him
Who loved me not. My blood may be all fire;
Yet in my heart there is a hidden well
Of icy pride, to cool the burning flame
Of my mad love,—ay, till it froze in death,—

Before the name I bear should e'er be stained
By weakness, pitiful and poor as that.
No : he sought and wooed me ; worshipped the earth
Whereon I trod ; lived at my very feet ;
Fed on my smiles,—till the proud heart was won.
Ambition came and opened wider views,
And Aubin's vanity was piqued to think
The wealthy heiress of Demenancourt
To such high merit as his own, so dull
Could prove.

EUGENIA.

If 'twas ambition swayed him—

BEATRICE.

Nay, hear me out : your wealth, Eugenia !
His eyes were dazzled at your boundless wealth.
If there be truth on earth, he loved me once ;
But love is lost, gone, and forgotten soon
With man, if ambition or interest
Point out his god and idol—wealth !
The banished Princess of Ferrara,
An exile comparatively poor,
Though once his idol, was in an hour forgot,
When he perceived your beauty, wealth, and rank.
Oh, blame me not, Eugenia, that I love.

It is a tyrant, not a slave. The sun
Will cease to shine, summer and winter,
And night and day, their course forget, ere love
Will want a wile to cheat poor woman's heart,
To think her every idle wish a truth.
It may be all in vain ; yet who is there
That can dash out the last faint ling'ring flame,
That on Hope's altar flickers yet ?

EUGENIA.

Alas !

Aubin's cold and callous, selfish nature,
Can never be endured by love like thine.

BEATRICE.

Thou know'st not all that I have borne ere now ;
Thou know'st not all that love like mine can bear.

EUGENIA.

Reflect ye, Beatrice ; the voice of reason—

BEATRICE.

The voice of reason, and the voice of truth,
Would from my heart desire I banish him ;
But then another voice will whisper yet
Such sweet excuses for his greatest faults,
Which, like as changing clouds upon the sky,
Cast dark'ning shadows o'er the spot they pass,

Altering the aspect of our lovely earth :
So feel I each excuse, by dear love framed,
Casts an obscuring shadow on his deeds,
Which will not suffer me to gaze on them,
As if the sun of clear unbiassed thought
Shone brightly 'fore my eyes. One effort more
Will Beatrice of Ferrara make
To save this man ; essay another trial ;
Find but the means of truly serving him,
Ay, truly and deeply : then if he prove
Ungrateful, she will cast him off and die. [A pause.
Eugenia, St. Real is in Paris.

EUGENIA.

Alas, alas ! I know it, Beatrice.
My heart tells me too well how I was loved.
But since my father's most fatal promise,
He shuns, forsakes the one he loved so well.

BEATRICE.

Go to. He thinks St. Aubin has your heart.
Eugenia, were I but loved as you,
Another day would see me far beyond
My Lord Duke Mayenne's counsel or advice.

EUGENIA.

How mean you, Beatrice ?

BEATRICE.

This:—I would fly,
Fly from the hateful yoke that threatens me.

EUGENIA.

Alas ! I know not how. With none to guide,
How can I fly from out this dreadful place ?
The city is beleaguered on all sides :
Nay, I know not how—

BEATRICE.

By a thousand ways.
There is nought to fear : I shall be with you.

EUGENIA.

Not yet, dear Beatrice, not yet ; unless
Most sharp necessity my flight shall urge.

BEATRICE.

When once they find that you reluctant are,
They may take measures to prevent your flight.

EUGENIA.

I cannot think that they will urge me so.
For in regard to Philip of Aubin,
They ne'er will favour him ; the King has not
A more devoted, or a truer man.
And in regard to any other one,
My father's dying promise to Aubin—

BEATRICE.

But you will never keep it, Eugenia?

EUGENIA.

No, Beatrice, I would rather die.

BEATRICE.

Yet hear me: think of all that may occur.

A thousand things may tempt Aubin to quit

The royal party, and the Leaguers join:

Your father's dying promise he may urge,

Ay, may obtain the sanction of Mayenne.

Oh, Eugenia! what wouldst thou then?

EUGENIA.

Fly,

Fly to the farthest corner of the earth,

Ere I'd fulfil a promise, none of mine.

Should that dread moment come, I do believe

I shall not want in courage to oppose,

E'en should they threaten to compel with force.

Then will I counsel take from none but you:

Guide me as seems most fit; and, Beatrice,

Rather than give my hand to one I hate,

I'll fly—

BEATRICE.

Write to me, write me but five words,—

“*Come to me with speed ;*” send it by your page
When you assistance need, and do not doubt
But I will find the surest means for flight,
E’en were you at the very altar’s step.

Enter MARCEL.

Well ?

MARCEL.

The jeweller, Armandi, waits without.

EUGENIA.

Fare ye well, Beatrice.

BEATRICE.

Let him enter.

[*Exit* MARCEL.]

Should it so happen, you will write ?

EUGENIA.

I will.

I shall not fail. My Beatrice, farewell. [*Exit.*

Enter ARMANDI. (*BEATRICE seats herself.*)

ARMANDI.

Enchanted and most honoured are my eyes
Once more to gaze upon thee, noble lady.
Most chaste and fair, I had with sorrow heard
The frightful fever—

BEATRICE.

Go to, Armandi.

Keep your dull nonsense for the fools it suits.
Matters more weighty cause your presence here.

ARMANDI.

Most beautiful of the beautiful, speak :
Your words are ever law to Armandi.

BEATRICE.

When followed by the precious seal of gold,
I know they are. Now hear me. I—I wish—
I wish—

ARMANDI.

You wish, perhaps, to see some friend,
And now require Amandi's influence,
His magic influence, to bring this friend
Into your presence ?

BEATRICE.

Out on thee, villain !
Whom dost thou take me for, pitiful slave !
I wish—I wish—

ARMANDI.

Perhaps you wish to see some friend *no more*.
Perhaps thou wouldst Armandi's influence
Should silently and secretly remove,

Lady, from out your sight, one who has been
Long an intruder there, and troubles you?

BEATRICE.

Perhaps I do.

ARMANDI.

Then am I right at last :
And, most fair lady, thou hast nought to do
But name the person, manner, and the time,
And there remains no more. Yet must I hint
'Tis rather costly work, if he, or she,
Must quickly disappear. Let it be slow,
And quietly, lady : we run less risk.

BEATRICE.

No :

It must in one short moment do its work ;
And with such powerful and unfailing speed,
That no physician, be he e'er so skilled,
Can find the art sufficient to undo
The deed that has been done.

ARMANDI.

It can be so ;

But 'tis too difficult and dangerous.
Suspicion would be roused upon a death
So violent, and most sudden in its means.

There is a poison,—*aqua tophana*,
So calm and tranquillizing in effect,
So slow in work, that doubt and fear both sleep.
Wait you but patient for a month,—a week ;
Give it but time, and it—

BEATRICE.

You heed me not.

Yet say, Armandi ; let me hear how 'tis
These deeds are managed. I would judge.

ARMANDI.

Lady,

Though thou art far above me, yet I claim
The blessing of being born in the land
With one so beautiful,—our Italy.
Knowing how dearly you were once beloved
By my late honoured and most royal Queen,
Although you often frowned upon the joys
Of her voluptuous and corrupted court;
Yet, for the love I bear her memory,
I will without reserve, lady, reveal
How best your purpose may effected be.

See here.

[ARMANDI produces and opens a very
small golden casket.]

The water in the purest fountain

In our own Italy, looks not more clear
Or bright than this ; no odour to be found,
To the eye no hue, to the lip no taste ;
Ay ; and yet, like many another thing,
With all this seeming pure simplicity,
There lurks within its hidden nature
Death in its slowest, deadliest form,—
Poison most fatal, and most famed. Three drops
Poured in the wine-cup of the wassailer,
And ta'en unheeded in his revelry,
Will cause that slow and gradual decay,
Which at the end of one short year will leave
A clod its victim in his mother earth.
Lady, the draught need but increased be,
To shorten its sure period by one half ;
Or shorter still,—to a few weeks, or days,
Let Armandi but know—

BEATRICE (*hastily*).

It will not do,

It will not do. Hast thou none other means ?

ARMANDI.

Many, most beautiful ; but in good sooth
I crave your patience : a rash and heedless
Youth could scarcely equal you in haste.

Our art has long been tasked to make the means
Of death at once so slow, so secret, and so sure,
That we can free us of our enemies
Without suspicion and unseen. I have
A flower, a rose of wondrous art and taste,
So like sweet nature's blooming bud, that keen
And sharp must be the watchful eye of man,
That could detect the cheat: were it but placed
In a fair beauty's bosom for an hour,
Within a week both health and life would fly.
Lady, I own those famous fatal gloves,
So exquisitely wrought in thread of gold,
Once worn by a queen, who since is dead.

BEATRICE.

You weary me, Armandi. I said I wished
Means more sure and quick.

ARMANDI.

Your patience, lady.

[*Produces another phial from the casket.*]

This liquid once tasted, all is o'er,
Rapid as the flash of your own dark eye,
Of the heart the fire, of the mind the life
At once extinguish, and at once expire.
Lady, I would not give that deadly dose

To one of note or rank, for a less sum
Than twenty thousand golden Henrys down,
Though it is scarcely worth a thousand crowns.
But 'tis so quick and clear in its effect,
So marked the traces that it leaves behind,
That the physician were a fool who doubts
The cause of death in him that drinks it.

BEATRICE.

Give—

Give it me— [*Beatrice snatches the phial from him.*

Is there here enough to kill?

ARMANDI.

Ay, to slay an army, lady. But what,
What mean ye? what would ye with it?

BEATRICE.

The one for whom this poisonous drug is meant,
Shall from my hand receive the cup it fills.
Nought shall you risk.

[*Takes a ring from off her finger, and
gives it to Armandi.*

There is a diamond,
A costly jewel, worth one half your wealth.
And now the poison's mine.

ARMANDI.

Lady, lady,

Thou art young, inexperienced, unprepared.
These deeds require the calm unshaken hand,
The unquivering lip and steady eye.
Noble Beatrice, were you discovered,—
The torture : then would you not betray me,
Lady ?

BEATRICE.

Howe'er I may condemn thee, man,
Rest satisfied I never shall betray.
I take and keep thy poison ; but no power
Shall e'er compel me to reveal your name.
Make thyself easy, man : I tell thee that
If e'er one drop of this rank stuff
Pass human lip, that lip will be my own. [A pause.
'Tis well to be prepared for all events :
'Tis well to ever have at hand a sure
And ready remedy for all the ills
That wait upon this wretched life : 'tis well
To hold the power to snatch ourselves away
From out the grasp of dire and changing fate.
And in the path I may be called to tread,
When I no longer can endure its way,
Then will I try another.

ARMANDI.

Far be it,

Gracious lady, if such your purpose be,
Far be it from me to venture to oppose.
Men think too much of death ; 'tis but to lose
A few short hours from a long race
Of pain and woe. Farewell, noble princess.
Far oftener 'tis a mercy than a wrong :
Men think too much of death. Farewell, lady. [*Exit.*

BEATRICE.

Heartless villain ! Heav'n knows thou holdest life
Light enough in others. Mine, mine at last,
Thou fatal drug ! How have I longed for thee,
When in some heedless moment I have risked
Discovery and ruin in the camp !
Rest next my heart, till Aubin calls me bride.
Firm in myself, firm to myself, my fate
I've sought : 'twas mine own deliberate act.
I've risked all happiness for love, and now,
When love seems lost, I tremble not to think
My fate hangs on the die within my hand :
And boldly will I cast it, let the chance
Be what it may. The day is wearing fast.
Within an hour I must be in the camp,
Or Aubin will—

Enter Page.

PAGE.

The Count Philip St. Aubin.

[*Exit Page.*]

Enter the COUNT ST. AUBIN.

BEATRICE (*aside*).

Oh, fate, I am discovered! All is lost!

AUBIN (*aside*).

Eugenia gone! Curse on the page: I thought
That I should prove too late. A thousand pardons,
Lady, for my intruding thus. These wars
Have rendered it so long since—

BEATRICE (*aside*).

I am safe.

AUBIN.

'Tis full an age since—

BEATRICE.

My Lord Count Aubin,
Your absence from this town has scarcely seemed
To me so long, that I should wish it o'er.

AUBIN.

No right have I to murmur at your words:
Yet, Beatrice, mayhap I can say that
In my defence, which you will—

BEATRICE.

Never hear,
Or for a moment listen to. Sir Count,
I doubt not that you can defend yourself :
I never yet knew man that could not do so,
Save he were idiot, or one born dumb.
If your accusing heart doth charge you now
With falsehood, avarice, or ambition,
Plead your own cause with it : no doubt 'twill prove
A judge most kind and lenient. Fare ye well.
Matters of moment call me hence. I crave
Your pardon, and thank you for the honour.
This interview, Sir Count—

AUBIN.

Oh, Beatrice !
At least one moment stay. Let me but hear
Once more that you are well and happy.
I heard you had been ill,—ay, near to death.

BEATRICE.

Count St. Aubin, didst ever see me look
More beautiful ? In good sooth, then, I was
Most ill,—a victim to the fever here ;
But well and happy now, if I did not
Hear Henry's roaring cannon every day,

And if my poor hotel were not so full
Of visitors.

AUBIN.

And wilt thou say no more
To Philip of Aubin, after what has
Passed between us ?

BEATRICE.

I know of nothing, sir,
That can have passed between us. Once or twice,
In some mad fit of folly, or of wine,
You vowed you loved Ferrara more than life,
Than rank, or wealth, or station : but, Sir Count,
She took those vows, as she has often done
A thousand others from as many men
Brighter and nobler than the Count St. Aubin.
As idle words which foolish men will speak
To women foolish as themselves, for want
Of better or more pleasant wit ; as words
Which to a hundred others you have said,
And to a hundred more will whisper yet,
Who, heeding not, will, like myself, forget.
Once more farewell, Sir Count. Speed with all haste
To the Hotel de Guise ; or else the League
May a most valiant convert lose. Farewell.

AUBIN.

Nay, Beatrice, now at least you do me wrong :
The League no convert claims in me. Mayenne
Granted me entrance freely into Paris,
On matters of great import to St. Real.
Who is detained a prisoner by him here.
I came to urge his liberty ; nought else :
But to his Majesty will I adhere,
So long as he and I both live.

BEATRICE.

Indeed !

Therefore the Count St. Aubin sent his page
To act as spy upon a noble house,
And watch the lovely prisoner in that place.
My lord, you traced her here : she's gone, and now
Most like is entering the Hotel de Guise.
Go : hearken to the golden arguments
Which that most wily woman, Montpensier,
Can now hold out : haste ye to Mayenne's Duke,
Lieutenant-General of the kingdom,
Head of the League. Suppose he offer you
The hand and fortune of Demenancourt ;
Can you resist, Sir Count, can you resist ?

AUBIN.

Madam, my honour would forbid it.

BEATRICE.

Ah !

Honour, your honour, Count St. Aubin? oh !

[Exit BEATRICE.

AUBIN.

Now, by my soul and faith ! she angers me.

What doth the woman mean ? I'll follow her.

Nay, I forget my promise to St. Real.

I'll hasten, as she bade me, to the Guise. [Exit.

SCENE III.

*A Splendid Apartment in the Hotel de Guise.**Enter the DUKE OF MAYENNE and MADAME
DE MONTPENSIER.*

MADAME.

Nay, but—

MAYENNE.

Again thou hast been tampering,

Wherein thou hadst no right to interfere.

Why, what is this about the young St. Real ?

Is it not bad enough that a rash boy,

Aumale, should lose a battle at Senlis,

Without your trifling with my honour thus ?

MADAME.

Nay! Duke of Mayenne—

MAYENNE.

Nay, my fair sister,

It seems to me you have forgotten that
My given word of honour, or safe-conduct,
Throughout my life I've ever held most dear.

MADAME.

True, Charles of Mayenne. Thy safe-conduct
Has never violated been by me.
If a kind friend of mine did choose to help
This young St. Real on his journey here,
I have not been to blame. I do not doubt
Within this hour St. Real will be here.

MAYENNE.

Within this hour he shall be free. No more
Meddling or quibbling with my honour thus.

MADAME.

Speak calmly, Duke Mayenne: the Count St. Aubin
Is now beneath thy roof. Oh, do not lose
This golden opportunity; but gain
More than the battle of Senlis e'er lost.

MAYENNE.

Say on: what hast thou done, what wouldst thou do?

MADAME.

What have I done, Mayenne ? Why simply thus :
Hearing it said, St. Real had some thought
Of seeking Henry's camp ere he came here,
I hastened him upon his route, and brought
My youthful Marquis safe a prisoner here.
What will I do ? Why, if your gracious self
Will only condescend to let me speak
One little word to Real ere he goes,
And if I do not find the means to make
My pris'ner draw his sword and join the League,
Why then, in God's name, you may talk to me
Of honour and safe-conduct all your life.

MAYENNE.

Hush !

Enter the COUNT ST. AUBIN.

Good morrow to ye, Count St. Aubin.
Right glad was I to hear that yester-eve
You had applied for a safe-conduct from us ;
Doubting not that you were by this time tired
Of consorting with those Huguenot boors,
Yonder at St. Cloud.

ST. AUBIN.

Ay, 'twere a bold step,

After what has occurred, to seek a pass
From my Lord Duke Mayenne. I fear you may
Keep me a pris'ner with my cousin here.

MAYENNE.

Thy cousin, Count ?

ST. AUBIN.

The Marquis of St. Real.

MAYENNE.

Made pris'ner in some late skirmish by us.

ST. AUBIN.

Skirmish ! my Lord Duke. No skirmish has there been
In this bad business. I charge you, Duke Mayenne,
To clear yourself from the base character
Which this transaction has affixed on you.

MAYENNE.

Thou mak'st me angry, sir.

ST. AUBIN.

No cause for anger,
If you are free from shame in this bad work :
If it be otherwise, I put aside
All the respect I owe to your high rank,
And to the noble station which you hold :
And this base matter 'gainst you shall I urge
As noble to noble, and as man to man.

MADAME.

Was ever the like heard ! Oh, heed him not,
Brother of Mayenne, heed him not. The man
Is mad, raving mad.

ST. AUBIN.

Not so mad, lady,
Nor so foolish, from his purpose to be turned
By sweet or angry words.

MAYENNE.

You are too bold.
The capture of your cousin was unknown,
Unauthorized, unheard of by me, till
This very day.

ST. AUBIN.

Then was I right.

[*Glancing at the Duchess.*]

MAYENNE.

Sir Count—

Enter the MARQUIS ST. REAL.

Marquis St. Real, you are free to come
And go, till your safe-conduct has expired.

ST. AUBIN.

I crave your highness' pardon. I have urged
This matter somewhat too boldly.

MAYENNE.

Nay, nay ;

We esteem you the more highly for it.

MADAME.

Marquis of St. Real, a word with you.

[*The Duchess and St. REAL retire up the stage.*

MAYENNE.

Count Aubin, the hand of a fair heiress

Lies at this moment in a Leaguer's gift.

Wilt have it ? wilt have her lands and lordships ?

Wilt join the League,—the party of the faith ?

It was her father's wish that you should wed :

Your own honour, reputation, duty,

Must surely urge you to it.

ST. AUBIN.

My Lord Duke,

For a moment I would fain speak with you

In this oriel here.

[*The Duke and St. AUBIN retire up the stage ;
the Duchess and St. REAL come forward.*

MADAME.

So, you will leave us ?

ST. REAL.

Madam, I must—

MADAME.

Nay, there is one fair maid
Who will weep to hear you're gone.

ST. REAL.

How mean you,
Lady?

MADAME.

Mark me, Marquis of St. Real.
A woman's eyes are keen : you are in love
With Eugenia Demenancourt ;—nay, nay,
She loves you. In the name of Mayenne,
Lieutenant-General of the kingdom,
I offer you her hand. Take it, St. Real :
Spare her the pain of importunity,
And make the loveliest woman in all France
The happiest, protected by him she loves.
Say not a word : your cousin waits you.
I shall expect you back within the hour.

ST. AUBIN (*coming forward*).

St. Real !—Your pardon, noble lady.

[*Exeunt Duke and Duchess on one side ; AUBIN
and REAL on the other.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Interior of the tent of ST. AUBIN, at St. Cloud.

The COUNT ST. AUBIN is discovered lying on a couch. BEATRICE OF FERRARA, disguised as the Page, under the assumed name of LEONARD, is standing by the couch.

AUBIN.

And you were never at the outposts stopped,
Leonard ?

BEATRICE.

Never. I passed and repassed
Oft as I liked ; and I will pass again
Their gates and walls, whene'er it pleases me.
Count Philip Aubin, I hold the secret
Of making me invisible at will ;
And sharp must be the eye of Huguenot,
Or Leaguer, that can spy me out, and stop
Your page upon his road.

AUBIN.

Ay, is it so ?

Thine were a secret worth the learning, boy.

BEATRICE.

Easy to learn, but to practise, hard.

First, had I of the sentry to beware

As I came up to him ; then, if he proved

A Huguenot Gascon, why I had to stop

At least a quarter of an hour, to hear

Of all the great exploits that he had done

At Montcontour, at Jarnac, or elsewhere ;

Then, seeming to believe the whole, to vow

To my brave boasting soldier that I was

The truant son of some great Huguenot Lord,

On my way back to hear Du Mornay preach

Against the Pope of Rome : then might I pass,

Without a further question, on my way.

If, otherwise, he were a fighting Swiss,

I did but boldly cry, " What is your price ? "

Slip the *gold* crowns into his open palm,

And fearlessly walk on. When I appeared

Before a gloomy soldier of the League,

I flung a green scarf o'er my vest, and swore

By the most holy mass I had gone out

To kill the King :—and so I would have done,
Had I not on the toes of one of his
Poor Polish puppies trod, and been dismissed
From out the presence for that grave offence.

AUBIN.

Faith ! but thou art a brave boy, Leonard.

BEATRICE.

Oh, call me not a brave boy : thou art wrong ;
Not a more arrant coward ever breathed.
Ere see a battle fought, I vow I'd die ;
Fly at a skirmish, or else lag behind.

AUBIN.

'Thou jestest, Leonard : the day will come,
When, foremost in the battle, you will prove
A brave and noble soldier yet. Tell me,
What is the latest rumour in the camp ?

BEATRICE.

The latest rumour in the camp ? Why this :
Not camp alone, but in the city too,
'Tis rumoured far and wide, that a large dower
And a fair lady's weak unwilling hand
Will soon induce the noble Count Aubin
To join the banner of the League.

AUBIN (*rising from the couch*).

Ha, boy!

Enter ST. REAL.

Oh, cousin! I would crave a boon of thee.
Your safe-conduct from Mayenne is not out:
Wilt once more enter Paris for my sake?
Remind Eugenia of my claim to her;
Bid her to think upon her father's word;
And tell her I will ne'er resign that claim.
Say, that in order to atone for aught
In which I may have hurt her will, or heart,
I'll change my course of living; cast from me
Those faults she seems to think so black;
So she will swear, some future day, to give
Her hand to me, and keep her father's vow.
You will do this for me?

ST. REAL.

'Twould be in vain.

She ne'er will give her heart and hand to one
Who has not sought and gained—

AUBIN.

What? her esteem,
Or some such idle nonsense. Why, I tell you

Fear, jealousy, revenge, and scorn,—ay, hate,
Are nearer roads to woman's heart, than e'er
Esteem or love : but disappoint her will ;
Cry her opinions false, and pain her heart ;
Cross her caprices, and herself insult ;
And yet 'tis but an easy thing to make
Her thine, if you but pique her vanity.
Why, good St. Real, she has told to me
This idle tale a thousand times before :
'Tis but the ringing of the same dull chime.
But, cousin, go : promise amendment ;
Your eloquence exert, vow constancy
And so forth, for me. What ! will you not go ?

ST. REAL.

No, Philip—no, I will not ; for I love
Eugenia too well to cheat her with a vow
Or idle promise, in that light tone made.
Nay, frown not on me, Philip of Aubin.
Hear me, and never say by me you were
Deceived. Aubin, 'tis not because I think
How hopeless is your suit with Eugenia ;
But that I feel my meeting her once more
To me will prove most dangerous, and I
More wretched shall be, without serving you.

AUBIN.

By my faith, is it so ? Now do I see
Somewhat more clearly how this all may end.
Oh, cousin mine ! are you the favour'd knight ?
Doubtless, doubtless they have been tempting you
With offer of her hand. Ay, now I see it all.
Sweet Madame de Montpensier hath engaged
To urge your suit with her.

ST. REAL.

Right ; thou art right.

Such offer has been made to me, Aubin.

AUBIN.

By heaven ! I thought so. On mine honour
This is right good and merry. Eugenia,
Poor timid child, will better service give
To Mayenne's cause, than half a score of hot
Unruly nobles, followers of the League.
Why, the incarnate devil seize the man !
'Twas but this day he offered her to me,
So I would join the League ; and now to you
Upon the like condition. Back with you,—
Back, back to Paris, Marquis of St. Real ;
Call in your troops and vassals from Senlis ;
On with the green scarf of the League. Away !

The blessed union sign ; and morrow's dawn
The sweetest heiress of all France
Will give her hand to you. The cursed League
Will rank thee midst its hypocrite
And coward followers. Go ; violate
Thy cousin's confidence. Oh, he will smile
To think how gallantly you carried off
His promis'd bride. On my soul and honour
'Twere a noble deed ! oh, 'twill rank thee high
Amongst us libertines of court and capital !

ST. REAL.

Thou art angry, Philip, and without cause.
I thought you knew me better ; for through life
Philip, have I not proved toward thee—

AUBIN.

What thou hast prov'd, I know : what you may prove,
Must not be left to chance. I'll take the means
To guard myself against what seems most like
To be your future conduct. Fare you well,
Marquis of St. Real : I find 'tis time
That I bestir myself. To-night I sup
With his brave highness of Mayenne.

ST. REAL.

Philip—

AUBIN.

Leonard, follow me.

[*Exit* AUBIN.]ST. REAL (*calling after him*).

Philip of Aubin !

[BEATRICE, *who has been listening at the back of the stage, rushes forward, looks after AUBIN, then speaks angrily to REAL.*

BEATRICE.

Well : thou hast let him go to wed, and break
A noble woman's heart ; one who hath lov'd,
Ay, loves thee still, and whom thou now wouldst doom
To lead a wretched, cheerless life of woe.
Oh, of the misery, the sorrow, think ;
The bitter reproach thou must answer for
Upon thy dying day :—in sooth, because
Thou dar'st not disregard some foolish claim,
Some false, unworthy claim upon thine honour,
Which priest and prelate, saint and martyr,
And thine own heart, in the calm after-day
Of life, will tell thee was no claim at all !

ST. REAL.

Hie to thy master, boy !

BEATRICE (*very loud*)Hie *thou* to him !

Wilt thou not fly to Paris :—claim the hand
The maid hath given thee ? Oh, answer me :
I shall go mad !

[*A military March without, which gradually
grows fainter.*

ST. REAL (*starting*).

Hark, to those sounds !

[*BEATRICE runs to the door of the tent.*

Listen !

See, see ; St. Aubin's troops are on the move :
Within an hour they enter Paris ; then
Wilt thou Eugenia lose for ever.
I must not loiter here. Say, wilt thou aid
In the escape of this fair girl to-night,
From these most cursed nuptials ? Oh ! hear me.
Oft has she told me how she lov'd thee. [*Weeps.*

ST. REAL.

Boy !

What does this mean ?—this disguise—who art thou ?

BEATRICE.

It matters not: wilt to the King ? Give him
This letter ; say I crave the boon he owes
To the exile Beatrice of Ferrara.
He will direct thee, with a chosen troop,

To lie in ambush near a distant gate
Of Paris, where, at midnight, thou shalt meet
Eugenia, and ——No longer must I stay,
Or Aubin will suspect me. Wilt thou swear
To do in this as I have urged thee?

ST. REAL.

Ay,

I swear ! I swear !

BEATRICE.

Farewell till midnight, then.

[*Exeunt, BEATRICE right, and REAL left.*]

SCENE II.

An Apartment in the Hotel de Guise.

*Enter, hurriedly, the DUKE OF MAYENNE and ALBERT
DE WALFSTROM.*

MAYENNE.

This night?

ALBERT.

Ay, this night Henry of Navarre
Hath sworn to enter Paris.

MAYENNE.

Is it so?

How heard you this ?

ALBERT.

But now from one, my lord,
The League shall rank amidst her bravest chiefs
In making vaunting Henry break his oath,—
The Count St. Aubin. He, and a strong force
Of armed retainers, within this hour
Have entered Paris, their good services
To tender to Duke Mayenne and the League.

MAYENNE.

I guess the bait that lured his Countship here.
'Tis well. To-night the League's best partisans
Sup here. Shall I postpone the ball ?

ALBERT.

Too late :

An hour ago the guests were pouring in.
'Twere better that the news of this attack
Remain unknown and secret.

MAYENNE.

Well, Albert,

Hie to thy post. Upon the first alarm
Hasten to me. With Aubin's aid we shall
Annihilate these vaunting Huguenots.

ALBERT.

My lord, here comes the noble Count. Farewell.

[*Exit* ALBERT.]

Enter ST. AUBIN.

MAYENNE.

Welcome to the League, Philip of Aubin.

AUBIN.

Duke of Mayenne, I come to claim the hand
Of thy fair ward, Demenancourt.

MAYENNE.

In sooth,
Thou art somewhat too pressing, Count of Aubin ;
Thou hast not yet obtained, by gentleness
And kind persuasion, the willing hand,
To grant you which the maid reluctant seems.

AUBIN.

My Lord Duke, I should have thought that you
Knew more of womankind : 'tis mere caprice,
Mere vanity ; nought else. When once my wife,
She 'll change—

MAYENNE.

No need see I for this mad haste.

AUBIN.

No need, Lord Duke ! Nay, but thou shalt see some.

Thou 'st heard the oath that Henry swore this day,
At midnight to be with thee, Duke Mayenne.
Now hear me swear never to move a foot
For thee or thine,—I grant my troops are here,
And here they stay within these walls, and I
Useless and unemployed,—till you consent
I call Eugenia bride.

MAYENNE.

Thou wouldst not
Wed her this night?

AUBIN.

This hour, Duke of Mayenne.
Tell me at once: is it thy will we wed
This night?

MAYENNE.

Since thou wilt have it so, it is.
I will acquaint the lady, though most like
'Twill grieve her much. Thou hast outwitted me.
These most hurried nuptials are uncalled for.
I'll send the lady to you. [Exit MAYENNE.

AUBIN.

By my faith,
Mayenne has met her in the corridor.
He speaks to her—she starts—entreats—she weeps.

He tells her I am here. By heaven ! she comes
With most mighty speed.

*Enter EUGENIA. She throws herself on her knees
before ST. AUBIN.*

EUGENIA.

Philip of Aubin,
Once thou wert generous and kind of heart—
Nay, nay ; hear me, I beseech thee. My life,
My future happiness or misery
Depend upon this moment.

AUBIN.

Eugenia,
Rise. I entreat thee.

EUGENIA.

No, no, I will not.
No ; I cannot rise till thou hast heard me.
Have I not used all the means I could devise,
All forms of entreaty, yet no avail ?
And now, at length, I kneel and here implore
That you will spare us both a life of woe.
Have I not often told you that I ne'er
Can love you as a woman ought to do ?
Have I not essay'd to fulfil my father's word

In vain? Honour and justice bid me say
I never can—nay, that I ne'er will be
Your wife. Sir Count, why persecute me thus?
You do not love, you have never lov'd me. [*She rises.*]

AUBIN.

I swear I love you, Eugenia. When once
My wedded wife, you will not find it hard
To treat and love me as you ought to do.

EUGENIA.

I know myself too well, Sir Count.

AUBIN.

If 'twas

Unknowingly I hurt your vanity
By my light mien t'wards others of your sex,
Think of the fickleness, the lightness of all
By whom I was surrounded.

EUGENIA.

Thou art wrong,
Wrong, sir. I accuse you not, I blame you not;
And think not that my 'haviour now toward you
Originates in wounded vanity,
Or baffled pride. No, sir, I know of nought
That can have thus induced you to construe
Or think from any deed of mine, that I

E'er felt a pang at any act of thine ;
Excepting thou hast taught me that I ne'er
Can love thee.

AUBIN.

Then I no longer doubt,
Madam, some other lover holds your heart.
Ha ! is it so ? You must learn to crush
These wild and foolish feelings in oblivion,
Once ye become my wife.

EUGENIA.

Count St. Aubin,
I never can, and ne'er will be thy wife.
The arm of power may to the altar drag,
And helpless lay me on its steps ; but there,
As here, my voice shall steadfastly pronounce
The same refusal that I give you now.
As long as I have strength to raise that voice,
Against your tyranny will I appeal.

AUBIN.

Oh ! you will think better of this, lady.

EUGENIA.

Never, sir, never. I tell you boldly,
Ay, and at once, that I would rather die,
Were death this instant in my choice,
Than be the wife of Philip of Aubin.

AUBIN.

Tell me,—the Duke of Mayenne hath so willed
We wed this night,—tell me, if I postpone
The ceremony till some future day,
Will you but let me hope that—

EUGENIA.

I will not.

Do not deceive yourself; I ne'er will be
Your wife.

AUBIN.

Then, Eugenia Demenancourt,
You seal your fate. Until we meet to-night,
Farewell! [*He waits as if for her to speak.*]

EUGENIA.

I have nothing more to say.

[*Exeunt, on different sides.*]

SCENE III.

A magnificent Ball-room in the Hotel de Guise. The ball is supposed to have commenced. At the opening of the Scene, the rooms are crowded with company, dancers, &c.

The Scene is so arranged, that three or four windows can be thrown open at the back, to exhibit a view of Paris. Curtains are hung before them at the commencement of the Scene.

A Dance.

At the end of the Dance, the DUCHESS OF MONTPENSIER, the DUKE OF MAYENNE, and EUGENIA come forward.

DUCHESS.

No power can make her change her dull attire.
Speak to her, Charles.

MAYENNE.

Nay, let her wear

What dress she will.

DUCHESS.

But it is ominous :

It must not be.

MAYENNE.

Madam, may I persuade thee
To change this gloomy garb but for this night.
'Tis most unusual, ungracious to appear
At the marriage altar in the sad robe
Of mourning. Why it looks as though ye were
About to follow to the grave some friend,
And not a happy bridegroom meet.

DUCHESS.

'Tis so.

EUGENIA.

Duke of Mayenne, I must not change this garb.
The robe of mourning suits me best,
When you would drag me to a fate,
Compared with which the grave itself were joy.

[*They retire.*

[*The Dance recommences. After some time, a distant peal of artillery is heard. The Dancers pause, as if to listen. No sound is heard: the dancing continues. A loud discharge of artillery is heard. All start. The dancing stops. ST. AUBIN enters during the Dance.*

ALBERT DE WOLFSTROM *rushes in.*

ALBERT.

King Henry, with a powerful force, is now
Without the walls! [Great confusion ensues.

MAYENNE.

Fear not, my noble friends;
All will be safe. With thy assistance, Count,
We'll drive this Henry and his Huguenots back.
We must postpone thy nuptials.

EUGENIA.

Thanks, Heaven !

[A nearer and louder discharge of artillery is heard. The greatest confusion ensues ; some of the guests hurry off ; the windows are thrown open ; the city of Paris is seen by moonlight ; shells, bombs, &c. appear to be falling in the distance ; drums heard beating to arms in the street. The tocsin is heard ringing.]

AUBIN.

Duke of Mayenne, King Henry seems about
To keep the oath he swore this day. My lord,
I need not say that I keep mine.

MAYENNE.

Sir Count,

There is no time to wed this night.

AUBIN.

Then make

The lady sign the contract. A few hours,
When we return victorious, I will make
Eugenia mine.

EUGENIA.

May that hour never come !

[The room is now entirely deserted by the guests.]

MAYENNE.

Madam, it grieves me much to say, motives
Imperative of state necessity
Compel me to require your signature
Here, to this contract of marriage 'twixt you
And Philip Count Aubin.

EUGENIA.

Duke of Mayenne, never !

MAYENNE.

In truth, Aubin, this should not go forward.

AUBIN.

Then farewell !

MAYENNE.

Madam, I insist ye sign.

EUGENIA.

Oh ! spare me.

MAYENNE.

Sign, woman.

EUGENIA.

Help !

[MAYENNE seizes her hand : she signs the contract.

MAYENNE.

It is done.

Sir Count, here is the contract signed.

EUGENIA.

Cowards! Oh! I faint.

MAYENNE.

Now follow me, Aubin.

AUBIN.

Madam, farewell!

[*Exeunt AUBIN, MAYENNE, and WOLFSTROM.*

EUGENIA (*alone*).

Oh, may we never meet again! Lost! lost!

Undone for ever! Oh, false Beatrice!

Where art thou now? [Weeps.

[BEATRICE OF FERRARA, *still disguised as a Page*,
enters at the further end of the room; she
rushes up to EUGENIA.

EUGENIA (*screams*).

Approach me not!

[BEATRICE *takes off her hat*; EUGENIA *rushes to her*.

EUGENIA.

Oh,

Beatrice! why didst thou not come sooner?

BEATRICE.

We must not lose a moment. The frightened guests
Are leaving the hotel. Midst the throng
We shall escape:—nay, faint not, Eugenia;

Within an hour thou shalt be safe. Tell me,
Where is Aubin?

EUGENIA,

Gone to the battle ; gone
With Mayenne.

BEATRICE.

We must make speed : never fear.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*A Garden in the Chateau de Guery, belonging to
BEATRICE, near St. Cloud.*

Enter BEATRICE and EUGENIA.

EUGENIA.

Thou art in jest, Beatrice?

BEATRICE.

I am not!

I would I were; but Fate has willed it so:—

We part, sweet friend, and most like for ever.

EUGENIA.

We part! Nay, Beatrice; but how is this?

BEATRICE.

Why thus. You go forthwith to my chateau,
Within a league of us; there, this same night,
The Marquis of St. Real will implore the hand
Of Eugenia Demenancourt. Blush not!

It is no jest; for part must we this day:

I for my native land, mine Italy,
From whence, most like, I never shall return.

EUGENIA.

But dost thou go alone, my Beatrice ?

BEATRICE.

Nay ; as the wife of Philip of Aubin,
I shall not go alone—

EUGENIA.

Thou art not mad !

Dear Beatrice, jest not with the dead.

BEATRICE.

The dead ! the living, Eugenia. Aubin
Is both alive and well, here in my house.
Be secret as the grave ; for if 'twere known,
His life were forfeit.

EUGENIA.

How was it

That he came here ?

BEATRICE.

On the night that we fled
From Duke Mayenne's power—

EUGENIA.

That dreadful night !

. BEATRICE.

Scarce had I placed you in St. Real's hands,
Ere with Marcel I sought the battle-field.
The morning broke as Henry drew his troops
Back to St. Cloud, o'ercome by the great strength
Of the more numerous army of the League.
There midst the dying and the dead I moved,
Seeking the corpse of him I thought no more :
When, to my utmost horror, I beheld
One of those fell monsters, plunderers of the dead,
Bending across the body of Aubin,
Who there, reft of all sense and feeling, lay.
Unbuckling the splendid surcoat that he wore,
I saw the wretch proceed to feel his heart,
If that its throbbing were all still. Then,—then,
Fearing that the dying man might yet revive,
He drew his dagger, and with upraised arm
Was 'bout to strike the senseless Aubin dead ;
When I in madd'ning desperation rushed,
And with a blow of this stiletto's point
Stretched him across the faint and prostrate man
He'd been so nigh to kill—

EUGENIA.

You saved his life !

You saved his life !

BEATRICE.

I did, I did. We then
Had Aubin secretly conveyed by night
Here to my chateau. For a time we thought
That he was dead—

EUGENIA.

Again you saved his life !

BEATRICE.

Beside his couch I watched, for two long weeks,
From day to day, from weary hour to hour :
There, in a cold and death-like trance he lay,
Till at length they told me all was o'er.
Hope then forsook my almost breaking heart,
When I beheld the priests prepare the last,
Sad, solemn rite they to the dying give :
Kneeling at his feet, as I thought, I took
My last sad look of him I loved so well.
When Aubin wildly gazed around the room ;
An effort made again to speak, and failed ;
Then closed his eyes, whilst murmur'd on his lips
The name of Beatrice. Eugenia !
When that one word,—that word,—that Beatrice,

Spoke by a voice so long unheard, struck on
The ear of her for whom that sound was meant,
I raised my streaming eyes, beheld the change
That there so soon had taken place ; then gazed
For a short instant full of trembling doubt,
And seeing it was true,—all true, quite true,—
I swooned, and senseless lay at Aubin's feet.

EUGENIA.

And he recovered ?

BEATRICE.

From that day so fast,
I almost tremble when I think on it ;
And that he loves me now I have no doubt.
The hour that I become his bride,—that hour
We part for Italy. How soon 'twill be
I know not ; but therefore have I written
To bid St. Real meet you, as I said,
This night. I shall not leave this place
Till he calls you his bride.

EUGENIA.

Oh, Beatrice !

BEATRICE.

And ere we part, I have a gift for thee,

A fond remembrance. 'Thou'lt think of me
When in a distant land. A few short years,
Again we'll meet.

EUGENIA.

I fear we never shall.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*A Chamber in the interior of the Chateau. The COUNT
ST. AUBIN is discovered on a couch. ALBERT DE
WOLFSTROM beside him.*

ALBERT.

They say that Beatrice of Ferrara,
In the habit of a page, lent her aid,
And was with Eugenia the night that she
Escaped from the Hotel de Guise.

AUBIN.

Indeed !

ALBERT.

Since then all trace is lost of her.

AUBIN.

Albert,

And if ye find her, we shall never wed.
She loves me not, and since we met, my heart
Hath also changed its service. I am now
With my first love, the only one that e'er
Had power or real right to call me slave.

ALBERT.

Thou wilt not wed the Princess?

AUBIN.

That will I.

ALBERT.

Then never enter Paris. Oh! to think
Upon the gay jests and the ribald laugh
That will re-echo when they hear of this.

AUBIN.

Go to. What mean you, sir? These are strange words.

ALBERT.

Not so strange as true: she hath beguiled thee.
No doubt you deem the woman pure and kind,
Who for a wild freak followed you about
From camp to camp. Why, I have heard that in
The time of the late Queen, she was wont—Nay,
They hold the marriage tie in Italy
Not quite so binding. But your pardon, sir,
I fear I speak too boldly. I offend;

And yet I only meant to serve you. See,
The lady comes. Love her, love her, Sir Count,
But never wed her. I gave that same advice
'Tis now three years—

AUBIN (*rising off the couch*).

I ever deem'd her pure
As falling snow, ere it hath touched the earth.

*Enter BEATRICE; ALBERT bows to her; she watches
him till he retires, then turns hastily to AUBIN.*

BEATRICE.

Aubin, who is that man?

AUBIN.

The German Count,
Sir Albert de Wolfstrom.

BEATRICE.

I know him well.
Wilt thou believe, Aubin, that man once dared—

AUBIN.

Nay, tell me not what he once dared; but say,
Beatrice, love we not one the other?

BEATRICE.

We do; we do.

AUBIN.

Now hear me, while I swear

With my whole heart and soul I love, adore,
And worship you, with the deepest, truest,
Most lasting love,—better than aught on earth !
Ay, that for thee I now am willing
To abandon friends, country, station, all—
All for thee.

BEATRICE.

Mother of Heaven ! there is no need
For such a sacrifice.

AUBIN.

If there should be,
Remember I have sworn to make it.
Where'er you chance to roam, my Beatrice,
Henceforth shall be my country ; where'er you dwell,
Henceforth shall be my home. There's nought but I
Will sacrifice without regret for you.
Tell me, dost thou love me with this same love ?

BEATRICE.

Can you doubt it, Philip ? can you doubt it ?

AUBIN.

Vain idle ceremonies, worthless ties,
May bind together the cold and careless hands,
The unimpassioned hearts of the world's slaves ;
But 'twixt thy heart and mine, my Beatrice,

There shall exist a tie dearer and purer,
Nobler and far more lasting; and we will know
None other.

BEATRICE.

What dost thou mean, Aubin?

AUBIN.

Need we a mere idle ceremony?
Doubt'st thou my love? Must your constancy faint,
Unless supported by a paltry form?
Is your love so weak, that when I ready am
To resign all,—ay, my dear native land,
For thee, thou wilt not the sacrifice make
Of a mere name for me?

BEATRICE.

[Disengaging herself violently from his grasp..

Out of my sight, viper! Oh God! oh God!
Ne'er let woman, henceforth and for ever,
Love that deceitful reptile man again!
Nay, but let her rather forsake, forswear,
And trample upon that black thing,—his heart,
Sport with his torture, and deceive his love;
Betray his confidence, mislead and hate him,
Till truth or faith he know not where to find
In all the world: for from the moment

That he believes her true, or kind, or his,
He turns a deadly serpent, which would sting
And poison for her the feelings and the life,
The happiness, the all, she would devote
Too readily to him for ever. Out—
Out of my sight, villain ! Why linger here ?

AUBIN.

Hear me !—hear me ! I meant not to offend.
I am no villain ; I meant but—

BEATRICE.

Villain !

Art thou no villain ? Thou, borne dying
Into my house ; treated with love, cherished,
Befriended, protected, rescued from death ?
Thou art no villain, who thus could turn
And strive to ruin her who saved thee once ?
Out on thee, man ! I would not be the base
Ungen'rous thing thou art, for all the power
And wealth that ever crowned a Cæsar yet !

AUBIN.

But hear me :—be mine on any terms.
I did but think that Beatrice of Ferrara
More liberal, more unprejudiced was,
Than our vain idle crowd of courtly dames,

Who but insist upon the marriage vow
To break it, one and all, within the hour
They swore to keep it, rather than that vow
Which bind the heart, not hands—

BEATRICE.

Say no more, sir!

Those last words were quite enough, if all
The rest were not. So, sir, you did but think—
You did but think that Beatrice of Ferrara
Was too liberal, too unprejudiced,
To hold her honour as a jewel bright,
Without the which life is but bitterness
And woe. You did but think, that because to save,
To reclaim, and to elevate a man
She thought not wholly lost, she braved opinion,
And, firm in her own truth, set the world's
Maxims at defiance. You did but think
She had forgotten virtue,—ay, and shame,
In her mad love for Philip of Aubin,
And for his sake would trample on the one,
As she had spurned the other!

AUBIN.

Beatrice, on mine knee I supplicate.

BEATRICE.

Rise, Count St. Aubin, I *command* you do. [*A pause.*

Sir Count, when first to me you talked of love,
I knew you to be foolish, young, and light.
But 'neath those gaities and follies wild,
I thought there hidden lay feelings more deep,
Better aspirations, and a nobler soul.
I heard of vices that I ne'er believed,
For in your language and your mien toward me,
Much was there that gave rise to better hopes.
Deeper offences came,—I name them not,—
Nor all the weakness of a woman's heart
Had taught me to believe: Love clings to Hope,
And slowly breaks its grasp. In a battle,
Wherein I had assurance you would fail,
With one attendant I watch'd you to the field,
Rescu'd you in the hour of extreme need,
And bore you wounded, dying as we thought,
Here to my dwelling. Then, like a sister,
Tended you night and day, till all hope was lost
And then I wept for you as never sister
Wept for brother yet. Against all hope,
All calculation, you recovered;
Saw how deep, how powerful, how strong, my love
Toward you was; taught me to give full scope
To that wild love; and now hast ended all
By proving to me,—a most bitter truth,—

That kindness, like the spring sun shining on
A torpid snake, but re-awakes your venom
With your strength; that you look upon the love
Of woman, but as the means of injuring her;
That kind deeds but hire you to ingratitude;
And that, though capable of passion,
Ye are incapable of love. Now, sir,
Thus convinced, again I bid you quit me,
And for ever. Nor time nor circumstance
Will change the vow I make, to banish you
For ever from my thoughts; for, sir, I swear
Beatrice of Ferrara would sooner die
Than wed the man she has been taught so well,
So thoroughly, so bitterly to despise!
Ay, even though he offered now to lay
An Emperor's diadem at her feet!

AUBIN.

Beatrice, again I do entreat—implore!

BEATRICE.

No more, Count St. Aubin, I will hear no more.
It is time, sir, you quit the woman
You have so basely wronged. Farewell.
My servants shall protect and guide you
On your way, should you protection need;

And never dare to cross the threshold
Of my house, once you have quitted it,
As never shall a thought of you, vile one,
Enter the heart of Beatrice again.

AUBIN.

Lady, your command shall be obeyed.
As to protection, I need it not.
Fare you well, Princess of Ferrara,
With thanks for the kindness you showed me once;
And with silence, if it must be so,
For the harshness you bare me now. Yet—
Yet I could wish to be heard—

BEATRICE.

No more !

Not a word more. Farewell.

[*Points to the door, curtsies as AUBIN retires ;
then, after a pause,*

That he should dare

The words of shame to whisper in mine ear !
The vile sophisms of guilt and infamy !
That he should dare to dream that I,—
I who have stood alone in the midst
Of a vicious, depraved, abandoned court,
The wonder and the hatred of them all,—

That I should e'er become his paramour !
To bear no other title than the vile
Italian Mistress of the gay Aubin !
Weak woman that I am ! 'Tis mine own fault !
No doubt, no doubt he thought that she who could
Go masquerading in a man's attire,
And herd with grooms and horseboys for his sake ;
That she who could boldly come and go
Oft through the gates of a beleaguered town,
At risk of question and discovery ;
Bind up his wounds with her own hand, and watch
Beside his sick couch many a long hour,
He thought would surely nothing him refuse,—
No, not her honour. Why, for aught I know,
In his profligate heart he scoffs and jeers
At the mere thought of my fastidiousness,
Ay, and now holds me as some light wanton.
Out on him ! out on him ! Did he but know
The heart he tramples on ! [*Falls weeping in the chair.*]

Enter MARCEL.

MARCEL.

The Count Aubin

Entreats that you will see him, ere he quits

Your house. He'll wait, should you so will it.

Your pleasure?

BEATRICE.

Never! Acquaint the Count St. Aubin
That he or I within this hour must quit
This house. Then follow to my chamber.

[*Exeunt, different ways.*]

SCENE III.

Gardens of the Chateau.

Enter AUBIN.

AUBIN.

I would return, but for the look of *scorn*
She flung on me. I could endure her wrath;
But her contempt——never!

Enter ALBERT DE WOLFSTROM.

The fiend have thee,
Albert de Wolfstrom! thou hast ruined me,
Lost me a bride! Thy foul advice at once
Her proud Italian spirit so inflamed,
I almost feared—

ALBERT.

I see she is enraged.

She will come round ; and if she does not, why
There is another yet.

AUBIN.

Whom dost thou mean ?

ALBERT.

I have a clue where Eugenia is hid.

Enter ARMANDI at the back of the stage : he listens.

Think you, St. Aubin, that a maiden fair,
All gentleness, all sweetness, so timid,
Could in a moment change into a thing
Stern and resolute as a warrior knight,
Without some very potent magic art ?
Think,—could she alone find the means to cheat
The keen and hard-judging Duke Mayenne ?
Could she escape from a beleaguered town,
Where on her ever were a thousand eyes,
By the simple means of her own courage,
Ingenuity, and daring ? Never !
St. Aubin, Eugenia loved you,—loves you,—
Ay, will love you still ; and now only weeps
The perfidy Beatrice of Ferrara

Taught her to credit you had shown toward her.
Had she not learned to think, from the first hour
That she set foot in Paris, that your heart
Was to the Lady Beatrice given,
And that you sought her hand but for her wealth,
She would at once, upon her father's death,
Have claimed your safe protection. Doubt me not,
When I tell you, that from Mayenne her flight
Was to the fertile brain and daring courage
Of Beatrice of Ferrara due. She 'twas
Who robbed you of your bride ; who now
Conceals the maid within a league from hence,
Weeping to think Philip of Aubin false,
And vowing, when she hears that he is wed,
To seek a convent's shade.

AUBIN.

Oh, this is brave !
Why yon proud, scornful dame shall find, Aubin
Can seek a mate as lovely as herself.

ALBERT.

Of that fair one, if you would gain the heart,
Spare no entreaty, no persuasion lose.
Act as she were your wife, till she is safe
In your own chateau. Seek her not alone ;

Stir not a step, unless you have at least
Fifty brave horsemen at your beck.

AUBIN.

At once,

I'll carry her off at once.

ALBERT.

Bravely said,

Sir Count. Unasked you have my aid.

AUBIN.

Thanks, thanks.

There's nought to do, but to mount fifty men
And no time lose. The keenest eye in France
Is on us both : she may be soon removed.

[*Exit* ARMANDI.]

ALBERT.

Of course, thou'lt give my soldiers a day's hire.

AUBIN.

Ay, and to thee a thousand crowns to boot,
An we succeed.

ALBERT.

We shall, I warrant you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The Chamber of BEATRICE in the Chateau. BEATRICE
is discovered seated at a table.

BEATRICE.

'Tis o'er ! The joys of life,—the dreams, the hopes,
And all the bright thoughts of a happy heart,—
Are blasted, wither'd, shrivell'd up, and dead !
The mother, who has watch'd from year to year
Her one, her only boy,—e'en from the hour
She clasped him to her heart in childhood's prime
Till she beheld him at her side a man,—
Her darling pride, her first-born, and her all ;
Then in that self-same moment seen him fall
Senseless and crushed by some dire thunderbolt,
Some great calamity, some dreadful blow,
Dead, dead at her feet, feels not more lost,
More mad, more desolate than I do now !

Enter MARCEL.

MARCEL.

As you desired, I wait your bidding here. [A pause.
The Count St. Aubin departed, lady,

Alone and unattended on his route
But now.

BEATRICE (*abstractedly*).

Did he—did he—Marcel ?

MARCEL.

Princess—

BEATRICE.

For twelve long years have I sojourned here,
In this fair realm of France ; but now my stay
Draws toward a close. The one, that last dear tie
That bound me to this place, is broken now.
Oh, my soul yearns for my native land !
I will tread back my way to Italy.

MARCEL.

To Italy ! once more to Italy !
Did I not tell thee, lady, at the time
When first you fixed your love on one, whose name
I dare not now pronounce, so much I hate
The base and coward—

BEATRICE (*angrily*).

Knave, thou'rt somewhat bold.

MARCEL.

Pardon me, noble mistress. I had forgot
That Armandi implores to speak with thee.

BEATRICE.

Armandi? Let him enter.

[MARCEL beckons to ARMANDI, who enters.

ARMANDI.

Noble lady, my heart's been ill at ease
Since thou obtain'dst that deadly drug from me.
My sins are great, but never yet did I
Sell poison to Italian. Oh, give back
The drug to thy poor servant, and the ring
Thou gav'st him for it shall be thine again.

BEATRICE.

Was it some angel sent thee here, to snatch
This curs'd temptation from my trembling hand?
Thy poison shall be thine once more—

[During the above speech, ARMANDI whispers to MARCEL, who turns suddenly to BEATRICE, and exclaims

MARCEL.

Lady!

The Count St. Aubin—

BEATRICE.

Oh God! what of him?

MARCEL.

Is on his way to carry off the fair
Eugenia Demenancourt—

BEATRICE.

Speak, Armandi.

What is all this?

ARMANDI.

But now I overheard

That he, with fifty men, this night surrounds

The chateau, where the noble maid is hid.

He purposes to bear her off—

BEATRICE.

Oh God! [*A pause.*]

There are no other means. Marcel, fly thou;

Haste to the camp of Henry of Navarre.

[*Writes on a paper at the table.*]

Give him this paper. Say that that vile traitor,

The Count Aubin, is now about to—to—to—

Tell him——You know what I would say.

[*Exit MARCEL.*]

BEATRICE.

Armandi,

Follow me. God, if we should prove too late!

ARMANDI.

Lady, the poison—

BEATRICE.

He would carry off.

The poor frightened bird from the dovecote!

ARMANDI.

But the poison—

BEATRICE.

Oh, we must speed,—must speed,
Ere the kite can pounce upon its prey—

ARMANDI.

But

The poison, Princess—

BEATRICE.

Armandi, follow me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

A gothic Chamber. At the back, a large window opening to the ground; a grove of trees is seen beyond, the moon shining in at the window. The stage is rather dark. EUGENIA is discovered watching at the window.

EUGENIA.

Midnight is passed. From hour to hour I watch :
My heavy eyes their weary task refuse.
St. Real ! He comes !

Enter AUBIN, (*EUGENIA screams*).

AUBIN.

My fairest bride, at length we meet—

EUGENIA.

No, no!

Call me not thy bride! Nay, death were better,
A far more preferable fate than that.

AUBIN (*seizing* EUGENIA *by the arm*).

Stay, madam. The chateau is surrounded
On all sides by my troops. I would
My bride should willingly and tranquilly
Come with me to my home; and not draw down
The harsh compulsion which I have the right
And power to treat her with. Wilt thou hear me?

EUGENIA (*struggling*).

Never, never!

AUBIN.

There are a hundred men without,
And ready to obey my slightest word.
Shall I call them, madam?

EUGENIA (*weeping*).

Oh. no! no! no!

What will become of me! what shall I do!

AUBIN.

But listen to me, ador'd Eugenia.

I thought 'twas mere caprice that made you look

So coldly on me. Now I know it all.

'Twas just, 'twas excellent, 'twas wise,—

'Twas like yourself; for well ye were deceived:

We both have been misled, deceived—

EUGENIA.

Indeed!

I know not what you mean.

AUBIN.

Thou hast been wronged;

Thou hast been cheated,—vilely, grossly wronged;

Taught to believe a man, who loved ye with

The deepest passion e'er swayed mortal yet,

A heartless profligate—

EUGENIA.

I am grieved, sir—

AUBIN.

I'll tell you all the base and crooked means

That have been set in work to make you hate me:

Then say if it be right and just those means

Should still their influence exert o'er you.

One of the late Queen Catharine's train of dames,—

[*BEATRICE and ARMANDI enter at the window.*

A train that will be marked with infamy

To all posterity—

EUGENIA.

It may be so ;

The name of Beatrice of Ferrara

Ever excepted,—the daughter of a Prince,

A sovereign Prince, as much distinguished for

Her many virtues as her noble rank.

AUBIN.

Did she not tell you that I loved her ?

Did she not swear full oft that I had vow'd,—

Ay, and uttered protestations at her feet ?

She did. I know that both by open words

And deep insinuations, she poisoned,

Worked on your mind against me,—taught you

That I was both profligate and base.

EUGENIA.

Never !

Upon my soul and honour, never !

AUBIN.

Nay,

She 'twas that ever crossed me in thy heart ;

She 'twas that laid the scheme that help'd your flight,—
That with you fled from Paris. Ay, tremble now.
Think'st thou there was no motive for all this?
I tell you that there was : she had loved me,
From the first hour we met, with all the love,
The ardour, and the fire, which the hot blood
Of none but an Italian can inspire :
She worshipp'd me, she persecuted me
With her eternal love. I hated her :
To her have I ever turned a deaf ear
And a cold heart. I car'd not for her ;
I lov'd her not ; despised and pitied her :
Had never lov'd, and often told her so ;
Ay, and though I scrupled not to say it,
But a few hours since I might have made her mine,
Upon the vilest terms I chose—

BEATRICE (*rushing forward*).

Liar !—

Liar !—liar !—

[*She stabs AUBIN, who falls.*

AUBIN,

Curse on you ! Curse—

[*He dies.*

ARMANDI.

Fly, fly,

Or you are lost ! Lady, you must not stay—

[*Firing of guns, clashing of swords heard without.*

KING HENRY, ST. REAL, and Troops rush in at the window. ST. REAL runs to EUGENIA: the stage is lighted up. BEATRICE remains gazing intently on AUBIN's body.

HENRY.

We are in time, fair lady, your bequest
To execute. Where is this most perverse,
Rebellious Aubin?

BEATRICE.

There—there—there he lies!

Ne'er to be perverse or traitor more.
Oh Philip! Philip! how thou hast trampled
On the poor wretched heart that loved thee once,
Happiness cast from thee, destruction sought,
And found it from a woman's hand!

HENRY.

Indeed!

Indeed! Ay, in God's name, what is all this?

[*A pause.*

From thine own lips, lady, I learn that thou
This moment hast an awful act committed,
Especially for a woman's hand.
In arms against his King, Aubin has died;

Therefore this deed shall not too strictly be
Inquired into. As it is, 'twere well,
Lady, you quit this realm, with all
Convenient speed. Your safety to insure,
A party of my guard shall wait on you,
Until you cross the frontier. Do my words
Fall on an inattentive ear? Lady,
May I ask if thou hast heard me?

BEATRICE.

Ay,—ay—

I have heard, my lord. Your majesty
Is lenient,—most lenient: my crime is great,
Oh, very great! But be it as ye will:
I shall depart.—My thoughts, to say the truth,
Are not so clear as some short half hour since.
I thank your majesty.—Farewell. Alas! alas!
Where shall I go, my lord? [To the King.]

HENRY.

Her brain is troubled.

Lead her hence.

[BEATRICE *leans on* ARMANDI, *and is about to*
quit the room, when she rushes back.

BEATRICE.

What, part us! Who would part us? Oh, never!

Philip, Philip of Aubin. He is dead, dead !

Stay thy yet parting soul for me. I come.

Our deeds unite us, and for ever !

*[Takes the poison, and instantly falls by
AUBIN'S body.]*

HENRY.

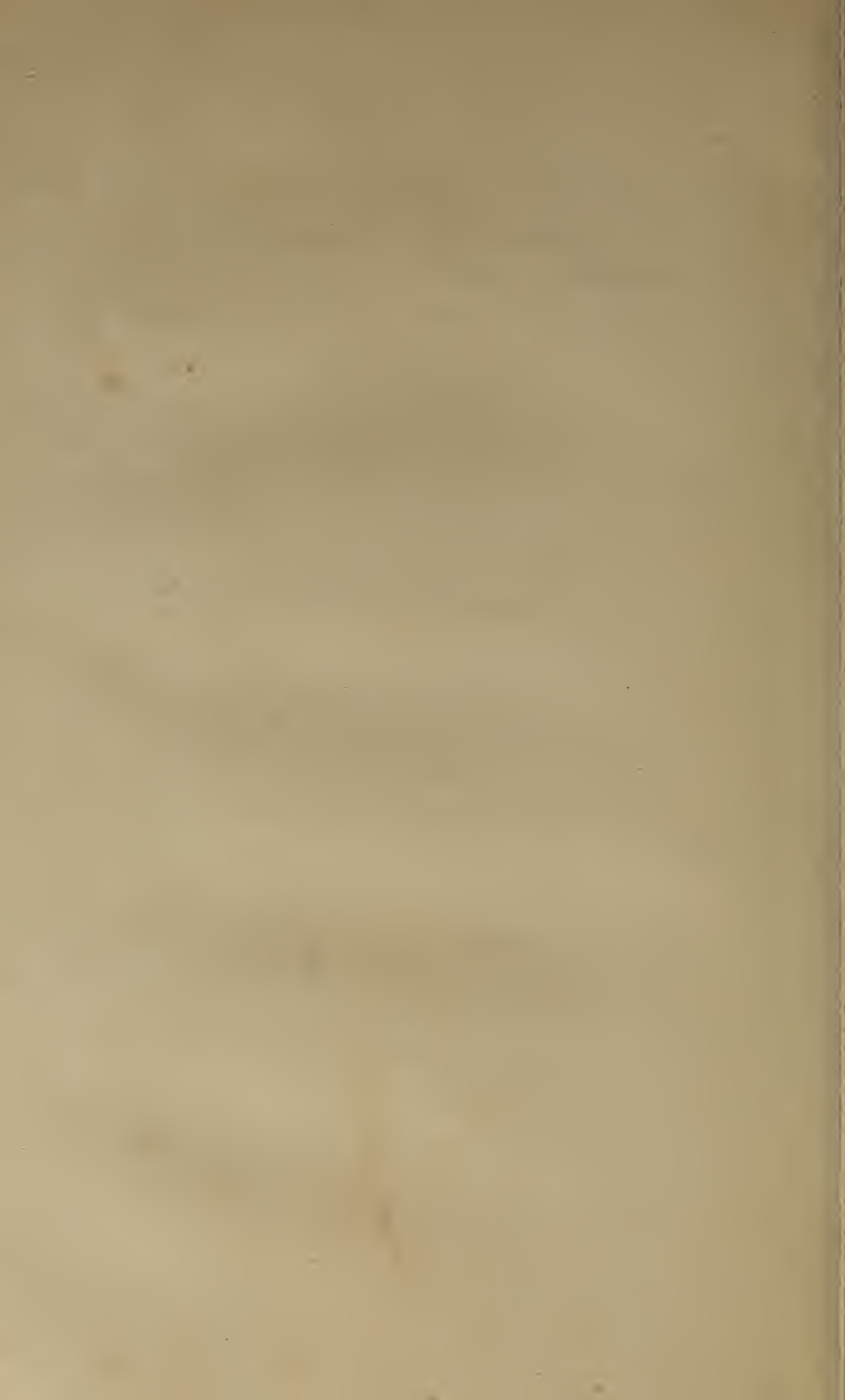
She swoons :

Support her—

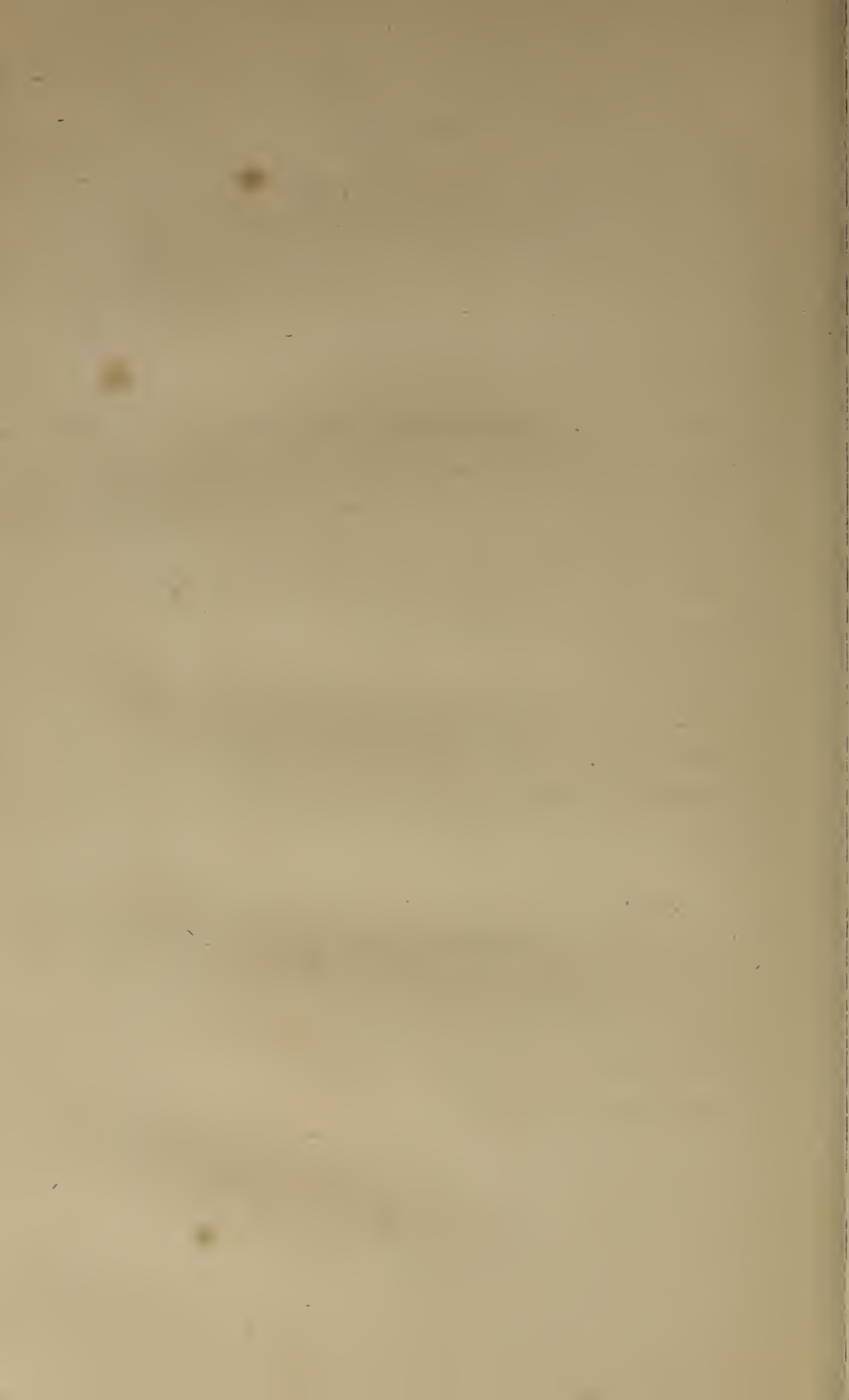
ARMANDI.

She is poisoned : she is dead !

END OF THE DRAMA.



POEMS.



A SUNSET IN THE ALPS.

From vine-clad glen, and rocky dark ravine,
Strange wreaths of thin and floating mist were seen
To rise ; and o'er the bosom of the lake,
In varied shapes, their upward course to take :
And now they hover round each mountain peak ;
Now, higher still, the azure vault they seek ;
So bright, so fair, fantastically strange,
Each moment sees their countless beauties change :
Till, painted by the setting orb, they seem
The golden visions of a fairy dream ;
Or troops of angels wending back their way,
On island clouds, to heaven at close of day.

How many a fair, a faint, and dying hue
Of purple, ruby, and ethereal blue
In faded glory on yon peaks repose,
And add a softened splendour to their snows !
As though the rainbow had forsook the air,
And chose the mountain side to slumber there.

IMPROMPTU.

Sent to a Lady with a few Violets in early Spring.

Wafted like incense to the skies,
The Violet's odours upward rise
So balmy sweet, the angels fair
Of heaven would that flower bloom'd there.

It once had raised its purple head
In Eden's brightest flow'ry bed ;
But Eve, when driven from that land,
Bore the poor Violet in her hand.
It was the flower she loved the most
Of all the fair ones she had lost ;
She lov'd it for its lowly grace,
And took it from its dwelling-place,
That it to her on earth might be,
Of Paradise a memory.
And since that time, the Violet tries
To send its perfumes to the skies,
That angels may recal once more
To heaven its lost and lowly flower.

MALIBRAN.

Bright sang the Queen of Song that night,
And they who heard her magic strain,
Enraptur'd at its eagle flight,
Half reckless, bade her sing again.
Once more that voice rang through the hall,
In brilliant cadence varying fast ;
Once more those sounds the crowd appal,
She sang her sweetest and her *last*.
One effort,—'twas a dying one,
A look of fire ; she droop'd her head ;
The hour of triumph then was done ;
A few short days, and life had fled.
A few short days ? How sad her fate !
The stranger hands that plaudits gave,
The self-same crowd,—the rich,—the great,
Conduct their idol to her grave !

The flowers which at her feet they laid,*
And the fair wreath that crowned her brow,
Have scarcely yet begun to fade :
Alas ! where is the wearer now ?
Where is the charmed voice that flung
Enchanted melody around,
Like harps by angel-fingers strung,
So wild,—unearthly was the sound,
So strange and thrilling was the cry ?
And while it echoed through the air
She smiled :—it was in agony,
Her proudest triumph in despair.
Though Death's cold grasp her heart o'erspread,
The world, she thought, should never say
The voice that such sweet music shed,
Could ever change or know decay.
All former efforts she outvied ;
Then breath'd a sigh that seem'd to tell,
As on her lips the music died,
To her lov'd art—a long farewell !
'Twas such an aching mournful sigh .
A fallen seraph, weeping o'er

* These lines were written a few days after the death of the unfortunate Malibran.

The lyre that he had woke on high,
Might breathe,—when it will wake no more.
Sweet child of genius ! hard thy fate,
So young,—so beautiful to die ;
Left in thy sorrow desolate,
And scarce a kindred mourner nigh,
To watch the last dark hours of one,
Whose destiny on earth was o'er ;
Whose meteor-course of fame was run,
Whose star had set,—to rise no more !

THE OUTWARD-BOUND.

I.

Beneath the blue and burning sky
With the blue wave, nought else around,
Away doth boldly speed,—doth fly,
The brave, the gallant Outward-bound.
There's *one* I love,—and now from me
He's borne afar,—oh ! far away :
The boundless sky and boundless sea,
Are all he views from day to day.

II.

The sultry hours pass slowly on,
He thinks the sun will never set ;
That night may come, and he alone
Walk the still deck, and sadly yet
On the ship's side at eve may bend ;
And, gazing once more t'ward his home,
O'er the wide waves a blessing send,
To those from whom he's doom'd to roam.

III.

In the burning clime he's bound to,
When a wanderer 'neath its sun,
And his eyes are cast around to
Seek a shelter,—finding none ;
Then will he think once more of all
He's left behind and home would be ;
And then dear Memory may recal,
One passing thought,—mayhap of me.

IV.

Oft think I on those hours now gone,
The morning that he left me ;
And of the gay,—the much-lov'd one,
That gloomy day bereft me.
For if we ever meet again,
Alas ! how changed we both shall be ;
The boys that parted changed to men,
Perhaps his feelings changed to me.

V.

Away, away ! such thoughts were mad !
Though years must pass before we meet,
He'll love me still ; it were too sad
Our youthful days should prove a cheat.
Though other ties be snapp'd in twain,
And those we both lov'd long be gone ;
As we did part, we'll meet again,
With none of our affection flown.

VI.

Oh, good ship, speed ! soon reach the land
The wanderer seeks ; and may he find
As true a friend, with welcome hand,
As the sad one he's left behind !
Now fly, ship, fly ! soon gain the shore ;
Through all thy sails a fair wind sound ;
No storm or danger meet thee more,
And Heaven speed the Outward-bound !

THE ROSE-BUD AND THE BEE.

A FABLE.

A full-blown Rose, in rich perfume,
Its crimson leaves in perfect bloom,
A blushing Rose-bud, steep'd in dew,
On the same tree in beauty grew.

The Bud was envious ; she aspir'd
To, like her sister, be admir'd ;
None mark'd her beauty, or her grace,
Yet all ador'd the sister's face,
Who smiles beneath the silken wings
The Butterfly around her flings.
The Bud, unnotic'd, is forgot,
And weeps in silence o'er her lot.

The full-blown Rose was blooming there,
The Bud was drooping in despair ;

The full-blown Rose, in all her pride,
Smiled on her sister at her side :
The foolish Rose-bud raised her head,
With grief and envy almost dead ;
She saw her sister merrily
Coquetting with a Honey-bee.

It was too much ; for he had been
By all the flowers and buds she knew,
The Rose-bud's earliest lover seen ;
And, jealous now, she bolder grew,
And was about to cry out "Shame!"
When stormy winds untimely came,
And scatter'd quickly all around
The full-blown Roses to the ground.

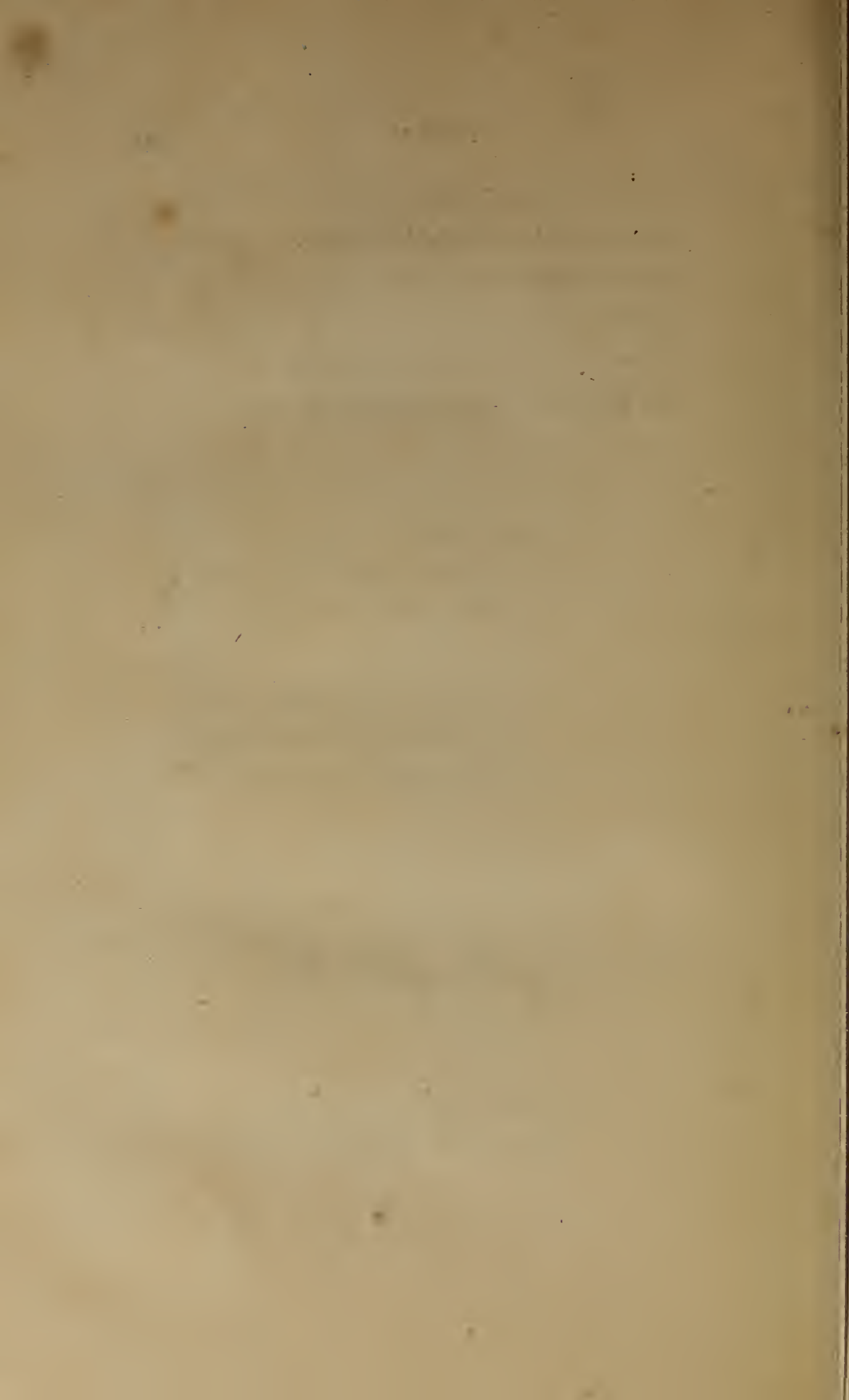
The storm was o'er ; its rage was past ;
Yet, ere it went, it kindly cast
Of rain-drops a rich diadem,
And many a bright and glist'ning gem,
Upon the Rose-bud and her stem.

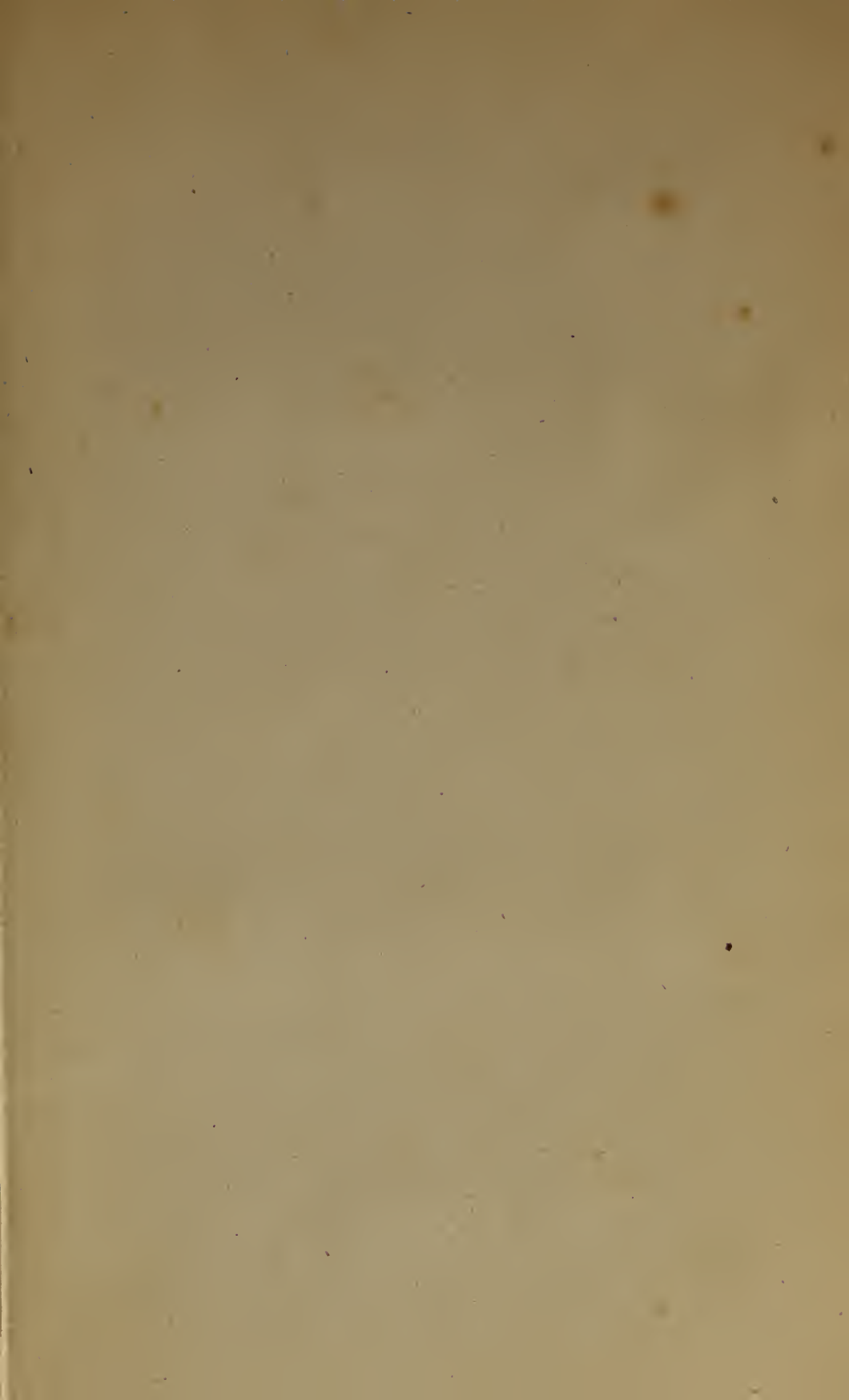
Away flew Bee ; but soon returned,
And at the Rose-bud's lips he burned :

He now implores she will disclose
Her graces, like the full-blown Rose.
“No, no, sir!” haughtily she said,
And coldly bow’d her lovely head;
“I have been taught, and not too late,
That if I do,—I share her fate.”

THE END.

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